

Gasoline rationing

Oct. 3 is new deadline for comments on **Energy Dept.**'s proposed rule and notice of public hearings on its contingency gasoline rationing plan. The extension is being granted to allow more time for the filing of written comments.

Details—Federal Register: Aug. 16 page 36280; July 21, page 31345; June 23, page 28134. **CONSUMER REGISTER:** July 15 and Aug. 1. Written comments may be sent to Public Hearing Management, Room 2313, Box TE, 2000 M St. NW, Washington, DC 20461; telephone 202-254-5202. For further information write or call Martin S. Kaufman, Energy Dept., Room 5116, Federal Bldg., 12th and Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20461; telephone 202-566-9380.

Appliance labeling

Sept. 29 is deadline for comments on **Federal Trade Commission's (FTC)** proposed labeling rules disclosing energy costs of operating 13 categories of appliances. The categories are: (1) refrigerators and refrigerator-freezers, (2) freezers, (3) dishwashers, (4) clothes dryers, (5) water heaters, (6) room-air conditioners, (7) home heating equipment, not including furnaces, (8) television sets, (9) kitchen ranges and ovens, (10) clothes washers, (11) humidifiers and dehumidifiers, (12) central air conditioners, and (13) furnaces.

Acting under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, **Energy Dept.** has developed test procedures which measure how much energy the appliances use. Under the same Act, the FTC is responsible for setting labeling rules which insure that consumers will have the necessary information to compare energy costs of competing products before purchasing appliances covered by the 13 categories.

Labeling highlights:

- Energy information will be expressed in dollars, rather than in measures of energy consumption or efficiency unless the comments show that dollar disclosure will not help consumers.
- Labels must include a range of energy costs of comparable products. Thus, if a consumer shops for a refrigerator, the label will show the cost of using that refrigerator, and also the cost of using all other refrigerators of comparable size.
- Labels will provide enough information to help consumers determine how much the labeled appliance might actually cost, taking into account varying energy costs and usage. Appliances used fairly uniformly, such as refrigerators, will have labels showing costs depending on different energy rates (such as 2¢, 4¢, 6¢, 8¢, and 10¢ per kilowatt hour for electricity). Appliances with varying usage levels, such as heating and cooling equipment, clothes washers and dryers, and dishwashers, will have labels showing a variety of energy rates for different amounts of use.
- FTC is proposing use of a chart on labels to demonstrate relative energy costs in a clearer fashion.
- Labels for dishwashers, clothes washers and humidifiers are larger and contain more information than those for all other products. This is because the main expense of using either clothes washers or dishwashers is the cost of water provided by the consumer's water heater and the main expense of a humidifier is the operating cost of the furnace or other device used to heat air. As proposed, labels for each of these 3 products will show the cost for each different heat source a consumer might have (using an average energy cost figure for each).
- Water heaters will have a unique label because FTC believes that a hot water supply rating (showing the amount of hot water available in an hour's time rather than the

amount of water which can be held inside a tank) is the best way for consumers to decide what size heater to buy.

Details—Federal Register: July 21, page 31806. **CONSUMER REGISTER:** June 15 and Oct. 15, 1977. Send comments to Christopher Keller, Presiding Officer, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580; telephone 202-724-1037. Public hearings on the proposed rules will be held starting Oct. 11, at 9 am in Room 332, Federal Trade Commission, Pennsylvania Ave. at Sixth St., NW, Washington, DC. Those wishing to speak should contact Mr. Keller at the above address before Sept. 29. For further information write or telephone Andrew Wolf, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580; telephone 202-724-1453.

Labeling—drained weight

July 1, 1979 is deadline for **Food and Drug Administration's (FDA)** new proposal to require that either the solid contents (or fill weight) before processing or the drained weight (weight of the food if the liquid is removed 30 days after processing) be declared on labels of most canned fruits and vegetables.

FDA's earlier proposal [**CONSUMER REGISTER** Nov. 15, 1975] would have required the listing of drained weight only. This proposal was based in part on a **Consumers Union (CU)** petition which asked that all processed fruits and vegetables packed in liquid be labeled with the drained weight of the solid food content.

During the comment period, FDA received more than 6,900 comments. According to FDA, "Although a few comments from consumers opposed declaration of the drained weight, more than 98% of those from consumers favored it." In addition, most of the comments from government agencies, dietitians, home economists, and others were generally favorable. However, the canning industry and other distributors of canned foods were generally against the proposal.

The **National Canners Association (NCA)** replied that the regulation would be too expensive, in part because testing required the destruction of food, and they estimated the proposed regulation would add one cent to the cost of each can. NCA proposed as an alternative a statement of the "solid contents," or the weight of the solid food which was put into the can before processing.

The latest FDA proposal gives canners the option of listing either the solid contents (or fill weight) or the drained weight. FDA estimates the cost of fill weight listing to be no more than 1/10 of a cent per can.

Some consumer groups are unhappy with the proposed rule because fill weight may not represent the final weight of the solid food, since fruits and vegetables may gain or lose weight during processing and storage.

Also, they point out that FDA has no means of determining the accuracy of a fill weight declaration unless an FDA inspector is present at the time of processing to check the weights, or unless canners make fill weight records available. CU comments that FDA should issue regulations enforceable not only by its own small inspection force but also by state and local authorities, and that consumers and consumer groups should be able to verify the declared weight.

Consumers are urged to contact the FDA at the address below for a copy of the proposed regulations.

Details—Federal Register: Dec. 9, 1977, page 62282. Send written comments to the Hearing Clerk (HFC-20), Food and Drug Administration, 200 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20204. For further information write or call Nicholas Duy, at above address; telephone 202-245-1231.

Cancer policy

Oct. 11 is deadline for comments on **Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC)** proposed policy and procedures for the classification, evaluation, and regulation of potential cancer-causing substances (carcinogens). Although much of the comment is expected to be scientific, CPSC is interested in comments on the most effective ways to protect consumers and to set guidelines for determining when the demand for a product outweighs the possible danger. CPSC wants to hear from consumers to determine just how much protection consumers actually want or feel they need.

Like the **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**, **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** and the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, CPSC may need to regulate a large number of products containing known or suspected carcinogens. Unlike an agency such as OSHA, however, the Commission is proposing a rule which has no binding legal effect. Any decisions on regulatory action will continue to be made in individual proceedings.

Since its creation in 1973, CPSC has taken regulatory action prohibiting use of 4 cancer-causing substances in consumer products: vinyl chloride in household aerosols, Tris (a chemical flame retardant) in children's sleepwear, wallboard patching compounds and artificial fireplace ash that contain asbestos, and products containing benzene.

CPSC's policy is intended to help provide guidelines for standards applied in classifying suspected carcinogens, evaluate products containing such substances, and determine regulatory action likely to be taken following classification and evaluation. Because this is such an important issue, CPSC is asking for comments and data before it adopts a final policy.

Details—Federal Register: June 13, page 25658. Send comments to Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207. Consumers are urged to obtain a copy of the proposed policy by writing to the Office of the Secretary at CPSC. For further information write or call Francine Shacter at the above address; telephone 301-492-6557.

Ipecac syrup labeling

Oct. 5 is deadline for comments on **Food and Drug Administration's (FDA)** proposed new labeling requirements for ipecac syrup, a nonprescription drug used to induce vomiting in accidental poisonings.

Dr. Donald Kennedy, FDA Commissioner, says, "We have reviewed ipecac syrup as part of our massive re-evaluation of all nonprescription drugs and have concluded that the drug is safe and effective. We are proposing new labeling for this antidote so that consumers will be able to make better use of it. Ipecac syrup should be in every medicine chest, especially in homes with small children. In cases of accidental poisonings, ipecac syrup can be a life-saving drug.

Proposed labels would have the following warnings:

- "Call a physician, Poison Control Center or emergency room for advice before using, and call immediately if vomiting does not occur within 20 minutes after a second dose has been given." This warning will be printed in red.

- Do not give to semiconscious or unconscious persons.

- Generally, ipecac syrup should not be used if strychnine, corrosives such as alkalis (lye) and strong acids, or petroleum distillates such as kerosene, gasoline, paint thinner, or cleaning fluid have been swallowed.

- "Do not administer milk or carbonated beverages with this product." Milk has been reported to reduce the syrup's effectiveness, and carbonated drinks could cause stomach distention.

FDA is also proposing that ipecac syrup be marketed in containers of one ounce or less.

Details—Federal Register: Sept. 5, page 39544. **CONSUMER REGISTER:** Sept. 1. Send comments (marked with Docket No. 4110-03) to Hearing Clerk (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, Room 4-65, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857. For hearing requests or for more information write or call William Gilbertson, Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857; telephone 301-443-4960.

VA mobile homes

Oct. 6 is deadline for comments on **Veterans Administration's (VA)** proposal to increase the allowable setup charges which may be included in VA loans for purchase of new mobile homes.

At present, VA limits the allowable setup fees (cost of labor and materials necessary to properly install a mobile home on a lot) to \$200 for a new single-wide mobile home and \$400 for one double-wide or larger. However, because of rising installation costs, VA wants to increase these amounts to \$400 for new single-wide mobile homes and \$800 for new double-wide mobile homes. In this way VA hopes to make it possible for more veterans to buy mobile homes with smaller or no cash outlays.

Details—Federal Register: Sept. 7, page 39833. Send comments to Administrator of Veterans' Affairs (271A), Veterans Administration, Washington, DC 20420. For more information write or call George Moerman at above address; telephone 202-389-3042.

Mortgages—VA and FHA

Veterans Administration (VA) and **Housing and Urban Development Dept. (HUD)** have increased the maximum interest rate on VA and FHA loans from 9 to 9½% effective June 29. The last rate increase for both agencies was from 8½ to 9% in May of this year.

The VA increase applies to guaranteed, insured, and direct loans for new homes and condominiums as well as the purchase of a mobile home lot or site preparation over \$2,500 on a lot previously acquired by a veteran.

The agencies say the new rate is necessary to make VA and FHA loans competitive with other available investments and to assure a continuing supply of funds for guaranteed and insured mortgages.

Details—Federal Register: July 6, page 29113; July 5, page 29000. **CONSUMER REGISTER:** April 1 and March 15. For more information write or call George Moerman, Veterans Administration, Washington, DC 20420; telephone 202-389-3042 or Chester Foster, Housing and Urban Development Dept., Washington, DC 20410; telephone 202-755-5898.

This listing, prepared by Lou Cook, is intended only as summary coverage of selected *Federal Register* items deemed of particular interest to consumers, and it does not affect the legal status or effect of any document required or authorized to be published pursuant to Section 5 of Federal Register Act as amended, 44 U.S.C. 1505. *Federal Register* is published Monday through Friday (except Federal Government holidays) by **Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration**. Subscription is \$5 a month or \$50 a year and may be ordered from **Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office**, Washington, DC 20402. Superintendent also sells copies of *Federal Register* for 75¢ each. Copies of *Federal Register* may be available in depository libraries.

consumer comment

Federal agencies want to learn your views on proposals and other items published in the *Federal Register* and CONSUMER REGISTER. Agencies use these comments in their decision making.

These forms are provided for you to use, if you wish, in commenting on these items. For more lengthy comments, feel free to use a plain sheet of paper. Send comment forms to addresses listed in CONSUMER REGISTER summaries. CONSUMER NEWS is publishing these forms in cooperation with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Name _____ Date _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

This is my opinion on (title of item in CONSUMER REGISTER) _____

by (name of agency) _____

published in *Federal Register* on (date) _____ on (page) _____

(over)

Name _____ Date _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

This is my opinion on (title of item in CONSUMER REGISTER) _____

by (name of agency) _____

published in *Federal Register* on (date) _____ on (page) _____

(over)

Name _____ Date _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

This is my opinion on (title of item in CONSUMER REGISTER) _____

by (name of agency) _____

published in *Federal Register* on (date) _____ on (page) _____

(over)

consumer comment

CONSUMER REGISTER publishes proposed and final rules, regulations and notices of interest to consumers originally appearing in the *Federal Register*. Notices on proposed rules published in the *Federal Register* and summarized in CONSUMER REGISTER give consumers the opportunity to participate in rule making prior to the adoption of final rules. The *Federal Register* is published to provide a uniform system for making available to the public regulations and legal notices issued by Federal agencies.
